

U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines

Hearing on Public Transportation Security

June 22, 2004

Testimony of Peter J. Pantuso  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
American Bus Association  
700 13<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Suite 575  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 842-1645

**Introduction**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, my name is Peter J. Pantuso and I serve as the President and CEO of the American Bus Association.

First of all, Mr. Chairman please accept my “thanks” and that of the industry I represent for scheduling this hearing on public transportation security. The American Bus Association and its members take seriously the duty to provide bus passengers with safe and efficient transportation options at reasonable cost. And for the ABA, “safe” also means, “secure.” Your leadership, Mr. Chairman and that of Committee Chairman Don Young, have allowed ABA members to continue to hope that the security of the bus industry will be maintained and strengthened. The ABA looks forward to continuing to work with you to strengthen the bus transportation system.

**American Bus Association**

The ABA is the trade association representing the private over-the-road bus industry. While the name “American Bus Association” may connote only transportation, indeed our reach is broader. ABA serves as the voice for almost 1,000 bus and tour operators but it represents a thousand hotel operators as well. In addition, individual tourist destinations, such as the Empire State Building in New York City; the Spy Museum in Washington and the Art Institute of Chicago are ABA members. Finally, ABA represents Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), bus manufacturers and companies that service the industry.

The ABA has 3400 members engaged in all manner of transportation, travel and tour services. In addition to the services noted above, our members are engaged in

commuter services, charter and tour operations, sightseeing and airport shuttle services throughout the nation. The private bus industry transports approximately 774 million passengers each year. A total that exceeds the number of passengers carried by the nation's airlines and rail service. In fact, the bus industry carries more people in two weeks than Amtrak carries in a year. Moreover, ABA members link some 5000 destinations in the United States as opposed to the airlines approximately five hundred destinations and Amtrak's fifty destinations.

The difference between the bus industry, the airlines and Amtrak is that ABA bus operators are largely, in big cities and rural areas, small businessmen and women -- small business people who operate with little or no subsidy from the federal government to support their day-to-day operations. And while the federal government is engaged in a massive effort to protect the airlines and Amtrak from further attacks, funds to aid the bus industry in the same effort have been, with one important exception, which I will explain shortly, lacking.

### **Bus Security**

Since the attack on the United States on 9/11 the American Bus Association has been engaged in assessing the security needs of the bus industry. ABA bus operators have told us what they need to aid them in the protection of the industry. First, training is the highest priority. ABA members want to train their personnel, drivers, dispatchers, and mechanics, in the techniques of threat assessment, threat recognition and crisis management. Second, equipment is needed for the operators. Examples of such equipment are cell phones and other communications systems between drivers and "home base" and emergency first responders; driver shields; cameras for bus facilities and garages, equipment necessary to provide security "wandering" of bus passengers as well as funds to protect significant bus passenger terminals at destinations such as, the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City, Las Vegas, Nevada; Branson, Missouri.

Security would also be enhanced by intermodal passenger facilities. Such facilities allow passengers to access multiple transportation modes in one location. A recent bill introduced in the House as the Intermodal Facilities Act (HR 1384) is an example of a program to provide funds for such intermodal projects. This bill, introduced by a bipartisan group of T&I Committee members, and also a part of the Administration's SAFETEA transportation reauthorization bill, would provide "seed money" for localities to build intermodal facilities. While these facilities would aid the transportation of passengers by concentrating transportation modes they would also aid passenger security by allowing security agencies to concentrate their personnel at intermodal locations. The Senate version of the transportation reauthorization bill, S. 1072, does contain a provision establishing such a program and the bus industry continues to hope for its adoption in the conference report.

### **Need for Federal Funds**

While our list of programs and funds for bus security is on balance fairly small, the need for such federal funds is large. This is because the bus industry for all of its reach and its passenger base receives little public money and as I have stated before, the industry is one of small businessmen and women. Indeed, the average ABA member has eight to ten motorcoaches. The two federal programs for which private bus operators are eligible are the so-called Section 5311(f) rural transportation fund which provides States with funds to subsidize intercity bus transportation and the ADA wheelchair accessibility fund which provides a small amount of money to allow private bus operators to place wheelchair lifts on buses. In the case of the section 5311(f) program the amount of funds available is limited to 15% of the Section 5311 rural transportation program. The wheelchair lift program is funded at seven million dollars. It is important to note that the cost of putting one wheelchair lift on a bus is between \$35,000 and \$40,000. As such many ABA members find themselves hard pressed to put wheelchair lifts on buses even at the current federal contribution level of 90% to bus operators fortunate to obtain a grant.

### **Committee Efforts**

The cost of wheelchair lifts points up the necessity for federal security funds. The cost of security training and equipment is more expensive than that for wheelchair lifts and security training and security equipment requires periodic updating. Of course, this committee knows the costs of security. Over the past two Congresses it has worked with the ABA to provide the industry with funds for security. In 2002 the Committee reported, and the House approved, HR 3429. The bill provided \$99 million in grants to help bus operators improve security. Security improvements that were, and are, necessary in light of the fact that, in the words of Chairman Young: “during the past 80 years, 50% of international terrorist attacks have occurred on buses or in bus stations.” The most recent example of the Committee’s work is its reporting of HR 875. This bill also provides funds for bus security and provides these funds to aid in training, equipping and maintaining bus personnel and facilities for improved security. This year the Senate passed S. 929, a bill that also provides funds for bus security.

Each of these bills would provide funds through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to private bus operators for the purposes detailed above. DHS would distribute these funds pursuant to applications from bus operators. The applications would detail the amount requested, the purposes for the grant and the operational “footprint” of the bus operator. The purpose of all of these bills would be to offer the maximum amount of protection for the most number of passengers.

### **Appropriations Process**

While the full Congress has yet to pass a comprehensive bus security bill the efforts just detailed are important because they have shown the way for the nation to improve bus security. The American Bus Association has also worked with the Appropriations committees in Congress to secure bus security funds. In the last two appropriations cycles we have garnered \$35 million for bus security. In 2003 TSA

distributed \$19.8 million of these funds to sixty bus operators and organizations, including the ABA. Another five million dollars was “reprogrammed” by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for airlines security. TSA has placed a notice in the Federal Register inviting eligible bus operators to apply for the remaining \$10 million dollars. The applications are due in early next month. Finally, ABA applauds the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for their recent approval of an additional \$10 million dollars for bus security in the FY 2005 Appropriations bills.

### **The Use of Security Funds**

A copy of the list of bus operator grantees is appended to my testimony. Reference to this list will reassure the members of the Committee that the money is being put to good use. The ABA is using its grant money to provide security training materials and an instructional CD to bus operators. ABA in concert with the United Motorcoach Association began a “train the trainer” program in May. We conducted sessions in several locations providing information on threat assessment, threat recognition and crisis management. The program was well attended and has been successful. Fully 90% of the evaluations holding that the program was “excellent” or “very good.”

In the realm of funding security related equipment Greyhound Lines, Inc. used its money to continue its efforts to increase passenger “wandering” in its larger terminals; increased the use of cameras at most terminals, increased guard personnel at terminals and developed a driver lateral shield with which Greyhound drivers can fend off attacks. Wisconsin Coach Lines used its grant to purchase screening equipment, e.g., metal detectors and handheld wandering devices. Several ABA members used grant money to begin the process of installing GPS tracking technology.

When I said that the Congressional efforts showed the “way to go” on this issue, it is literally true. The appropriations committees and the TSA used the bus security bills as a template for how the appropriated funds should be distributed and for what purposes. In a very real sense, the bus industry’s efforts to improve security owe much to the Committee and its members.

Moreover, these efforts would not have been possible without federal funds. As bus operators are largely small business companies money for efforts to improve security prior to 9/11 were largely non-existent. After 9/11 and before the availability of federal security funds, few bus operators were able to fund such efforts without incurring increased costs. As one example, may I cite the efforts of C&J Trailways an ABA member based in New Hampshire, with operations up and down the East Coast. After 9/11, C&J Trailways instituted a program in which all tickets were sold in the passenger’s name subject to positive identification. This alone required the addition of staff at company-operated terminals during peak traffic periods. For its part, after 9/11, Greyhound Lines increased passenger wandering, restricted seating on the front row of its motorcoaches, issued pre-programmed cell phones to all drivers and established a strict “zero tolerance” policy on aggressive behaviors or enroute disturbances.

Even with the ABA training program in place the security costs to the bus industry increases. C&J Trailways has expended over one hundred hours each year in employee training related to security. The collective cost for the provision of these services and training exceeds \$90,000 on an annualized basis. C&J Trailways did not receive any TSA funding for its security efforts. Prior to 9/11 Greyhound estimates that it was spending approximately five million dollars on security, after 9/11 its costs jumped to \$10 million dollars and even with its grant of nine million dollars in TSA security grant funds, it has spend an additional \$4.5 million dollars on security.

### **The Future**

The security efforts and the costs listed above is testimony to the ongoing need for transportation security funding for the private bus industry. American Bus Association members speak now of the need for GPS systems, with “real time” information about their buses and personnel. They talk of the need for updating the training materials and the need for more “train the trainer” sessions, in more locations. They speak of the need for more equipment. Greyhound Lines is exploring the purchase of magnetometers to screen packages in its terminals. A step that bus terminals and destinations may soon require.

In addition, ABA’s discussions with the TSA lead us to believe that the future will include an increased focus on the use of ISACs (Information Sharing and Analysis Centers). ISACs will entail the establishment of communications infrastructure to share time sensitive security information between industry and government agencies. If ISACs are to be required in the future, such an expensive undertaking is one that can only be accomplished by the government and is not an expense that can be borne by the private bus industry.

The need for more funds for bus security seems obvious given the sums spent to secure the airlines (in excess of \$15 billion) and Amtrak (\$5 billion). It appears that as we seek to “harden” transportation facilities, those who seek to do the United States harm will turn to less secure areas and facilities as targets. President Bush has said that the War on Terrorism “will not be won easily or quickly.” As long as that is the case, we all must continue to expand and update the security of our transportation infrastructure and protect those 774 million passengers who ride our buses.

### **Conclusion**

The American Bus Association looks forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman and the Committee to ensure that our transportation system, which is second to none in safety, reliability and low cost, retains that ranking when “security” is added to that list of duties.

Thank you for you time and I will be happy to answer any questions.

